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General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/46. It addresses the further strengthening of the relationship between disarmament and development within the United Nations. In addition, the report contains information received from Member States on the subject.

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 72/46, on the relationship between disarmament and development, the General Assembly stressed the central role of the United Nations in the relationship between disarmament and development and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen further the role of the Organization in this field.

2. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development (see A/CONF.130/39).

3. In paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. Furthermore, in paragraph 7, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

4. On 2 February 2018 the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States seeking their views on this issue. At the time of writing, replies have been received from Brunei Darussalam, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Peru and Ukraine. The European Union also sent its views. This information is contained in sections III and IV below. Any view received after 15 May 2018 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs[1] in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/46

5. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to strengthen its role regarding the relationship between disarmament and development. This is pursued mainly through three avenues: inter-agency coordination on matters that affect peace, security and development; the coordination of efforts towards achieving the goals set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the promotion of transparency and confidence building in military spending.

6. Peace, security and development are inextricably linked, as there can be no development without peace and no peace without development. Solid, enforced arms regulation and adequate weapons management can contribute to a safe and stable environment, which, in turn, is a necessary condition for the achievement of sustainable social and economic development. Clearance of mines and explosives from fields, infrastructure and roads allow their productive use for civilians looking to take up their lives and livelihoods. Low levels of illicit arms in circulation reduce the risk of armed conflict and violence and create a precondition for post-conflict reconstruction that could lead to enhanced investment opportunities. The coordination mechanism within the United Nations on small arms, the arms trade and ammunition (Coordinating Action on Small Arms), chaired by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, chaired by the Mine Action Service, are two mechanisms ensuring that full attention continues to be paid by entities of the United Nations system to the development-related aspects of arms regulation and disarmament.

[1] www.un.org/disarmament.

7. The Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism has in recent years addressed issues such as developing system-wide policies on small arms and on improvised explosive devices, which have significant implications for development. In addition, it is a primary mechanism through which United Nations entities coordinate their activities in relation to the Arms Trade Treaty and Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action coordinates activities within the United Nations to address the inhumane and indiscriminate consequences of landmines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions. Coordinated clearance and destruction of such weapons, victim assistance and awareness-raising have a positive impact on development prospects for communities affected by these weapons.

8. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under target 16.4, set an ambitious target to significantly reduce illicit arms flows. The United Nations endeavours to assist States further in strengthening their capacity to attain that target. An indicator has been developed to measure progress towards the target, and the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) are coordinating efforts within the United Nations Secretariat on reporting, data collection and monitoring for the indicator.

9. Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations states the need for "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". Reduction of military expenditures has long been on the agenda of the United Nations and as are the promotion of transparency and confidence among States on the matter. To this end, the Office for Disarmament Affairs maintains the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, a voluntary transparency instrument by which Member States exchange information related to their military expenditures. In recent years, on average, around 40 States have submitted reports. For the instrument to be effective, close-to-universal annual participation by Member States remains essential.

III. Replies received from Governments

Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

Brunei Darussalam supports disarmament efforts and the non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction at both the regional and global levels. Brunei Darussalam is a party to most of the major instruments relating to disarmament and the non-proliferation of such weapons.

Brunei Darussalam is of the view that disarmament is an integral part of the maintenance of stability and security, which are in turn prerequisites to the development of the nation.

Brunei Darussalam balances its spending, putting equal emphasis on defending the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while also undertaking development projects and nation-building activities. Brunei Darussalam follows its national objectives as stipulated in its initiative Brunei Vision 2035 and is currently implementing its eleventh national development plan.

Besides participating in disarmament initiatives and regional security efforts, Brunei Darussalam has also undertaken various measures in realizing the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[11 May 2018]

The United Nations and the international community have given considerable attention to disarmament and socioeconomic development. This topic is linked to the issue of the arms race and continuing military expenditure, which negatively affect the world's human, financial and natural resources and place a significant burden on national economies.

In the Arab world, States' weapons spending has increased owing to political, economic, financial and social problems, enforced collective migration, wars and internal conflict, all against the backdrop of the current conditions and the presence of terrorist organizations. As a result, their foreign debt has grown and development has lagged. Arab States have increased their spending on weapons systems with a view to achieving a strategic balance in conventional weapons and maintaining security and public order. In short, expenditure has been redirected from development to the military.

International terrorism and the terrorist organizations that act as its proxies have directly affected security and stability in the region and in States around the world. The consequences in political, economic, social and humanitarian terms have been drastic. States have taken on high levels of expenditure in order to tackle and suppress terrorism, and their development programmes have suffered as a result.

Specialists estimate that real military expenditure has seen a dramatic increase since the 1980s, as compared with previous years. Annual expenditure grew to 15 per cent, and military expenditure passed the $100 billion mark in 1990. Statistics show that military expenditure in the period 1989–1991 was far greater than in the period between the two world wars. However, total global military expenditure over the last decade has seen a 16 per cent increase as compared with previous decades.

The Arab world accounts for a high proportion of global arms imports, especially since the outbreak of conflicts in the Arab region and the so-called Arab Spring. Growing arms purchases have caused States' domestic budget deficits and foreign debt to swell, and development has seen a slowdown.

Development, the acquisition of armaments and military expenditure are closely interrelated. The growing squeeze on resources for development, combined with the increasing military expenditure resulting from conflict, have caused a significant shortfall in the development process in the region. Some States have borrowed funds and exploited their own natural resources in order to invest in armaments instead of development.

From a humanitarian perspective, the conflict has caused a considerable number of deaths, permanent disabilities and injuries. It has exacerbated unemployment and caused substantial refugee flows, which have destabilized the region's economies, societies, industry, education and development planning.

As regards security and border control, States have allocated a share of their financial resources to confronting smugglers and saboteurs in order to protect their borders. This, too, has added to their military expenditure.

States are focused on the need to preserve their security, something that is a natural right guaranteed by the United Nations. Military expenditure can, however, be reduced without affecting security interests, so long as States that adopt such an approach can be given international guarantees that they will be protected.

If military expenditure is curbed and the concept of security through confidence-building measures is strengthened, it will be possible to allocate financial, human and material resources to civilian purposes and scientific and economic projects that would boost development in those countries.

At several forums on armaments, Jordan has stated that it is fully committed to United Nations non-proliferation and disarmament programmes. It has developed its legislation and taken the following actions at the national, regional and international levels:

- At the national level, Jordan has adopted laws, regulations and procedures regulating weapons. It has adopted laws setting forth procedures for the import, storage, transfer and brokering of weapons, and prohibiting the illicit trafficking thereof. Jordan has removed all of the anti-personnel landmines from minefields on the border. A large proportion of the land has been reallocated to agriculture and returned to civilian farmers.
- At the regional level, Jordan has ratified the conventions on armaments and arms control concluded at the League of Arab States level.
- At the international level, Jordan has acceded to numerous international conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation. It consistently encourages the international community to maintain peace and security, prevent conflict by resorting to peaceful solutions and constructive negotiations, and build confidence among States at all levels.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
8 May 2018

The Army Command wishes to make the following points:

Lebanon has consistently supported instruments related to disarmament in general and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in particular, because such weapons constitute a threat to security and peace, and the funds that are spent on them could be used in and contribute to the advancement of various spheres of development.

Lebanon is beset by armed violence and is in need of all possible assistance in relieving the suffering that it causes. Notwithstanding the security and military circumstances that are currently affecting the country, and the onerous duties that the army must undertake both along the borders and inside the country with a view to implementing Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), all means available are being used to promote economic and social development.

Lebanon is working continuously to eradicate all forms of armed groups, combat illegal arms trafficking and attempted arms smuggling along the Lebanese border, and thus provide the security that is needed in order to revive the economy and attract investment.

Oman

[Original: Arabic]
[16 April 2018]

Oman has consistently pursued a policy of balance in all areas. It is continuing its efforts to achieve socioeconomic change and development. For that purpose, it is implementing comprehensive plans that involve all sectors of society, organizations

and the private sector. It attaches particular importance to military development, to the extent needed. It aims to ensure that such efforts are carefully calibrated and do not clash with or impinge on its other development plans.

The actions taken by Oman to achieve socioeconomic development account for part of the resources allocated to implementation of the disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. Oman has made financial contributions and donations of a technical and other nature to human rights organizations. Represented by the Ministry of Defence, it has acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It takes part in United Nations meetings regarding the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

The Ministry, represented by the Sultan's Armed Forces, is making every effort to promote social development and health in the country to the extent necessary. It engages with society in the process of development and construction. It has partnered with the private sector to implement numerous projects and armament contracts, which are fulfilled by companies. For instance, engineering capacities have been used to pave roads, dig wells, build social housing, provide military transportation and aviation, and offer medical services.

Peru

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

The investments that are being made in the armed forces at the institutional level are intended to maintain and guarantee security and national defence and to combat the proliferation of illegal items within the army's areas of responsibility.

The defence investments of Peru are among the lowest and most transparent in Latin America as compared with the spending and gross domestic product of each State in the region. This fact has been confirmed by the reports of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which participates in global security conferences and forums and carries out independent analysis of information regarding global security and military spending.

In accordance with their current structure and capacities, the armed forces fulfil the functions mandated by the Peruvian State and strike an appropriate balance when allocating military spending in defence of the nation.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Ukraine understands the importance of redirecting expenditures from military to civil purposes. It fully supports the endeavours of States and diverse international governmental and non-governmental organizations to undertake measures in this regard.

However, since 2014 Ukraine has been facing severe military aggression from Russia. The Russian terrorist forces continue to conduct offensives in eastern Ukraine. The aggressor State builds up its military capacities in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, impeding security not only in the Black Sea area but also in the whole south of Europe as well as in North Africa and the Middle East.

Under such conditions Ukraine is forced to increase financing for military purposes in order to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Currently, the invader State makes it impossible to pursue economic and social development by implementing disarmament and arms limitation measures. Ukraine's efforts are directed towards the restoration of peace and security in the country and the reinstatement of control over internationally recognized borders.

Therefore, only the full compliance by all Member States, first and foremost for Ukraine by Russia, with the Charter of the United Nations could create the indispensable preconditions to achieve economic and social development in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/46 on the relationship between disarmament and development.

IV. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

Disarmament and development are interrelated, notably regarding the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. As already recognized in 2001 in the Programme of Action, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and causes a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels. Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly mentions the objective of significantly reducing, by 2030, illicit financial and arms flows. In its strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, adopted by the European Council on 16 December 2005, the European Union responds to the threat posed by illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition and underlines the need for consistent security and development policies.

In a concrete follow-up to the European Union's strategy against illicit small arms and light weapons, the European Union provides considerable assistance through a number of projects to various countries to strengthen the action against accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. Since 2004, more than €100 million has been contracted to small arms and light weapons control projects. The priorities include: stockpile management; the destruction of surplus and confiscated small arms and light weapons; capacity-building for marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms and light weapons; and tracking the sources of illicit weapons and ammunition in conflict affected areas. The European Union is also assisting countries in enhancing their national arms transfer control systems to prevent weapons from falling into unauthorized hands. The European Union also financially supports activities of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and, more generally, confidence-building and transparency measures on arms transfers, which can contribute to decreasing the arms race. The European Union's support to the Arms Trade Treaty can be mentioned in this regard.

Further to small arms and light weapons control projects, disarmament projects are also funded by the European Union regarding anti-personnel landmines and chemical weapons. All European Union member States are parties to the respective conventions banning landmines and chemical weapons and requiring their destruction by States parties. European Union support is notably provided to a number of States parties to complete such destruction.

Under various development related financial instruments, the European Union also funds projects relevant to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration within its larger post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.